

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Previously Presented) A printing system including a plurality of data processing devices and a plurality of printing devices for executing a printing operation when a printing job signal is received from any one of the plurality of data processing devices, comprising:

communication system for communicating data among the plurality of printing devices;  
printing system provided in at least one of the plurality of printing devices for executing a print job based on the print job signal; and

a controller for executing the following steps:

grouping the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages employed in the printing devices;

designating a managing printing device among the printing devices belonging to the same language group; and

wherein a first printing device transfers the printing job signal received from any one of the plurality of data processing devices to the managing printing device if the first printing device is inoperative to execute the printing job signal, and

the managing printing device transfers the printing job signal received from the first printing device to a second printing device belonging to the same language group as the first printing device so that subsequent processing of the printing job signal is not performed by the managing printing device.

2. (Previously Presented) A printing system according to claim 1, wherein the managing printing device comprises a first storage system for storing data regarding other printing devices belonging to the same language group;

at least one of the other printing devices comprises a second storage system for storing information regarding the managing printing device of the same language group; and

said controller executes the following steps:

transmitting the processing language and information processing speed of at least one of the plurality of printing devices to at least one other printing device;

grouping the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages employed in the printing devices;

designating a printing device having the highest information processing speed in the same language group as the managing printing device;

causing the designated managing printing device to store information about at least one other printing device belonging to the same language group into said first storage system; and

causing at least one of the printing devices other than the managing printing device belonging to the same language group to store information about the managing printing device into at least one other second storage system.

3. (Previously Presented) A printing system according to claim 2, wherein the controller selects a printing device to which the managing printing device distributes the printing job signal based on the information processing speed.

4. (Previously Presented) A printing system including a plurality of data processing devices and a plurality of printing devices for executing a printing operation when a printing job signal is received from any one of the plurality of data processing devices, comprising:

communication system for communicating data among the plurality of printing devices;

printing system provided in each of the plurality of printing devices for executing a print job based on the print job signal; and

a controller for executing the following steps:

grouping the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages employed in the printing devices;

designating a printing device capable of processing different languages in the plural language groups; and

wherein a first printing device transfers the printing job signal received from any one of the plurality of data processing devices to a managing printing device if the first printing device is inoperative to execute the printing job signal, and

the managing printing device transfers the printing job signal received from the first printing device to a second printing device belonging to the same language group as the first printing device so that subsequent processing of the printing job signal is not performed by the managing printing device.

5. (Previously Presented) A printing system according to claim 4, wherein the managing printing device comprises a first storage system for storing information regarding other printing devices belonging to the same language group;

at least one of the other printing devices comprises a second storage system for storing data regarding the managing printing device of the same language group; and

said controller executes the following steps:

transmitting the processing language and information processing speed of at least one of the plurality of printing devices to at least one other printing device;

grouping the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages employed in the printing devices;

designating a printing device having the highest information processing speed in the same language group as the managing printing device;

causing the designated managing printing device to store information about at least one other printing device belonging to the same language group in the first storage system; and

causing at least one of the printing devices other than the managing printing device belonging to the same language group to store information about the managing printing device into at least one other second storage system.

6. (Previously Presented) A printing system according to claim 5, wherein the controller selects a printing device to which the managing printing device distributes the printing job signal based on the information processing speed.

7. (Previously Presented) A printing system including a plurality of data processing devices and a plurality of printing devices for executing a printing operation when a printing job signal is received from any one of the plurality of data processing devices, comprising:

- communication system for communicating data among the plurality of printing devices;
- printing system provided in each of the plurality of printing devices for executing a print job based on the print job signal; and
- a controller for executing the following steps:
  - grouping the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages employed in the printing devices;
  - designating either one of the printing devices belonging to the same language group or one printing device belonging to plural language groups as a managing printing device; and
  - wherein a first printing device transfers the printing job signal received from any one of the plurality of data processing devices to the managing printing device if the first printing device is inoperative to execute the printing job signal, and
  - the managing printing device transfers the printing job signal received from the first printing device to a second printing device belonging to the same language group as the first printing device so that subsequent processing of the printing job signal is not performed by the managing printing device.

8. (Previously Presented) A printing system according to claim 7, wherein the managing printing device comprises a first storage system for storing information regarding other printing devices belonging to the same language group;

at least one of the other printing devices further comprises a second storage system for storing information regarding the managing printing device of the same language group; and

said controller executes the following steps:

transmitting the processing language and information processing speed of at least one of the plurality of printing devices to at least one other printing device;

grouping the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages employed in the printing devices;

designating a printing device having the highest information processing speed in the same language group as the managing printing device;

causing the designated managing printing device to store information about at least one of the other printing devices belonging to the same language group in the first storage system; and

causing at least one of the printing devices other than the managing printing device belonging to the same language group to store information about the managing printing device into at least one of the second storage system.

9. (Previously Presented) A printing device for executing a printing operation when a printing job signal is received from any one of plural data processing devices comprising:

printing system for executing a print job based on the printing job signal;

communication system for communicating data between a first printing device and at least one other printing device;

storage system for storing information about other printing devices having a processing language compatible with that of the first printing device or a managing printing device; and

a controller for executing the following steps:

grouping at least one other printing device having a processing language compatible with that of the first printing device;

communicating data indicative of the processing language and information processing speed of the first printing device to the at least one other printing device belonging to the same language group and comparing the information processing speed of the first printing device with the information processing speed of the at least one other printing device;

if the first printing device has the highest information processing speed, designating it as a managing printing device and storing information regarding other printing devices belonging to the same language group in the storage system and, if not, storing a printing device having the highest information processing speed among other printing devices as a managing printing device in the storage system; and

if the first printing device is the managing printing device, selecting one printing device to which the print job signal is to be delivered upon receiving a request for a print job from one of the other printing devices to deliver the print job signal to the selected printing device; and

if the first printing device is inoperable to execute a print job, sending the request for a print job and the print job signal to the managing printing device.

10. (Previously Presented) A program product stored in a recording medium executable by a computer for controlling a printing system including a plurality of data processing devices and a plurality of printing devices each of which executes a print job when a print job signal is received, said program product including a program for:

grouping the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages employed in the printing devices;

designating one of the printing devices belonging to the same processing language group as a managing printing device;

transmitting individual status signals from at least one of the other printing devices belonging to the same processing language group to the designated managing printing device; and

delivering a print job signal received by one printing device inoperable to execute a print job to a second printing device belonging to the same processing language group so that subsequent processing of the printing job signal is not performed by the managing printing device.

11. (Previously Presented) A program product according to claim 10 wherein a processing language and information processing speed of at least one printing device are transmitted to at least one other printing device;

a plurality of printing devices are grouped into one or more groups based on individual processing languages;

a printing device having the highest information processing speed among the printing devices belonging to the same processing language is assigned as a managing printing device;

the managing printing device stores information about at least one other printing device belonging to the same processing language group; and

at least one other printing device stores information about the managing printing device.

12. (Previously Presented) A program product according to claim 11, wherein the managing printing device selects a printing device to which a print job signal is be delivered based on the information processing speed of the printing device.

13. (Previously Presented) A program product stored in a recording medium executable by a computer for controlling a printing system including a plurality of data processing devices and a plurality of printing devices each of which executes a printing operation when a print job signal is received, said program product including a program for:

designating a printing device belonging to plural processing language groups as a managing printing device;

transmitting status signals from at least one of the other printing devices belonging to at least one of the plural processing language groups to the managing printing device; and

delivering a print job signal received by a printing device inoperable to execute a print job to a second printing device belonging to the same processing language group so that subsequent processing of the printing job signal is not performed by the managing printing device.

14. (Previously Presented) A program product according to claim 13 wherein at least one printing device transmits its processing language and information processing speed to at least one other printing device;

a plurality of printing devices are grouped into one or more groups based on individual processing languages;

a printing device having the highest information processing speed among the printing devices belonging to the same processing language is assigned as a managing printing device;

the managing printing device stores information about at least one other printing device belonging to the same processing language group; and

at least one other printing device stores information about the managing printing device.

15. (Previously Presented) A program product according to claim 14, wherein the managing printing device selects a printing device to which a job signal is to be delivered based on its information processing speed.

16. (Previously Presented) A program product stored in a recording medium executable by a computer for controlling a printing system including a plurality of data processing devices and a plurality of printing devices each of which executes a print job when a print job signal is received, said program product including a program for:

grouping the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages employed in the printing devices;

designating either one of the printing devices belonging to the same language group or one printing device belonging to plural language groups as a managing printing device;



transmitting individual status signals from at least one of the printing devices belonging to the same language group to the managing printing device; and

transferring printing job signal received by a printing device inoperative to execute a print job to a second printing device of the same language group to which the inoperative printing device belongs so that subsequent processing of the printing job signal is not performed by the managing printing device.

17. (Previously Presented) A program product according to claim 16, wherein the managing printing device comprises a first storage system for storing information regarding other printing devices belonging to the same language group;

at least one of the other printing devices comprises a second storage system for storing information regarding the managing printing device of the same language group; and

said controller executes the following steps:

transmitting the processing language and information processing speed of at least one of the plurality of printing devices to at least one other printing device;

grouping the plurality of printing devices based on one or more processing languages employed in the printing devices;

designating a printing device having the highest information processing speed in the same language group as the managing printing device;

causing the designated managing printing device to store information about at least one other printing device belonging to the same language group into said first storage system; and

causing at least one of the printing devices other than the managing printing device belonging to the same language group to store information about the managing printing device into at least one other second storage system.

18. (Previously Presented) A method for controlling a printing system including a plurality of data processing devices and a plurality of printing devices for executing a print job when a print job signal is received from any one of the plurality of printing devices, comprising the steps of:

grouping the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages employed in the printing devices;

designating a managing printing device among the printing devices belonging to the same language group;

transmitting a status signal from at least one of the printing devices belonging to the same language group to the managing printing device; and

transferring a print job signal received by a printing device being inoperative to execute a print job to a second printing device of the same language group to which the inoperative printing device belongs so that subsequent processing of the printing job signal is not performed by the managing printing device.

19. (Previously Presented) A method for controlling a printing system including a plurality of data processing devices and a plurality of printing devices for executing a print job when a print job signal is received from any one of the plurality of printing devices, comprising the steps of:

grouping the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages employed in the printing devices;

designating a printing device capable of processing different languages in the plural language groups among the printing devices as a managing printing device;

transmitting a status signal from at least one of the printing devices belonging to the same language group to the managing printing device; and

transferring a print job signal received by a printing device inoperative to execute a print job to a second printing device of the same language group to which the inoperative printing device

belongs so that subsequent processing of the printing job signal is not performed by the managing printing device.

20. (Previously Presented) A method for controlling a printing system including a plurality of data processing devices and a plurality of printing devices for executing a print job when a print job signal is received from any one of the plurality of printing devices, comprising the steps of:

grouping the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages employed in the printing devices;

selectively designating either a printing device belonging to the language group or a printing device belonging to plural language groups as a managing printing device;

transmitting a status signal from at least one of the printing devices belonging to the same language group to the managing printing device; and

transferring a print job signal received by a printing device inoperative to execute a print job to a second printing device of the same language group to which the inoperative printing device belongs so that subsequent processing of the printing job signal is not performed by the managing printing device.

21. (Previously Presented) A printing system including a plurality of data processing devices and a plurality of printing devices for executing a printing operation when a printing job signal is received from any one of the plurality of data processing devices, comprising:

communication system for communicating data among the plurality of printing devices;

printing system provided in each of the plurality of printing devices for executing a print job based on the print job signal;

storage system for storing device information of at least one other printing device; and

a controller for performing the following steps:

grouping the plurality of printing devices into plural language groups based on processing languages employed in the printing devices;

designating a printing device having the highest information processing speed among printing devices capable of processing at least two different languages as the managing printing device;

storing device information about at least one printing device belonging to at least one of the language groups processable by the designated managing printing device; and

transferring printing job data from any printing device to a second printing device belonging to the same language group so that subsequent processing of the printing job signal is not performed by the managing printing device.

22. (Previously Presented) A printing system according to claim 21 wherein the controller selects the managing printing device based on the device information about the plurality of printing devices, groups the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages processable by the managing printing device, transmits device information about printing devices belonging to the processing languages processable by the managing printing device and transmits information about the managing printing device to at least one other printing device belonging to the language groups.

23. (Previously Presented) A printing system according to claim 22 further comprising selection system for selecting the managing printing device manually or arbitrarily based on the device information of the plurality of printing devices.

24. (Previously Presented) A printing system according to claim 21, wherein the controller transfers print job data to a printing device having the minimum feature set necessary to process the print job data among the printing devices belonging to the same language group.

25. (Previously Presented) A printing device for executing a print job when a printing job signal is received from any one of plural data processing devices comprising:

printing system for executing a print job based on the printing job signal;  
communication system for communicating data between the printing device and other printing devices;

storage system for storing information about at least one other printing device having a processing language compatible with that of the printing device or a managing printing device managing the printing device; and

a controller for executing the following steps:

if the printing device has been selected as the managing printing device, storing device information regarding at least one other printing device belonging to the same language group into the storage system; and

if the printing device has not been selected as the managing printing device, storing the managing printing device of the printing device and device information regarding the managing printing device;

if the printing device is not the managing printing device and is inoperative to execute a print job, then transferring print job data, which is received from one of the data processing devices without management of the managing printing device, to the managing printing device through the communication system; and

if the printing device itself is the managing printing device, then transferring print job data to a second printing device of the same language group which is operative to execute a print job.

26. (Previously Presented) A program product stored in a recording medium executable by a computer for controlling a printing system including a plurality of data processing devices and a plurality of printing devices each of which executes a print job when a print job signal is received, said program product including a program for:

grouping the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages employed in the printing devices;

designating a printing device belonging to at least two language groups and having the highest information processing speed as a managing printing device;

storing device information regarding at least one of the printing devices belonging to individual language groups processable by the managing printing device; and

when print job data, which is received from one of the data processing devices without management by the managing printing device, is transferred from any one of the printing devices, transferring the print job data to a second printing device belonging to the same language group.

27. (Previously Presented) A program product according to claim 26 executing the following steps:

selecting a printing device belonging to at least two language groups and having the highest information processing speed among the printing devices belonging to at least two language groups as a managing printing device;

grouping the plurality of printing devices based on processing languages processable by the printing devices; and

transmitting device information regarding at least one of the printing devices belonging to the language groups processable by the managing printing device and notifying the managing printing device of printing devices belonging to each language group.

28. (Previously Presented) A program product according to claim 27 in which the managing printing device is manually or arbitrarily selectable among the plurality of printing devices.

29. (Previously Presented) A program product according to claim 26 in which the print job data, when transferred from any printing device to the managing printing device, is transferred to a printing device having the minimum feature set necessary to process the print job data among the printing devices belonging to the same language group.

30. (Previously Presented) A method for controlling a printing system including a plurality of data processing devices and a plurality of printing devices each executing a print job when a print job signal is received, comprising steps of:

(a) grouping the plurality of printing devices based on the processing languages employed in the printing devices;

(b) designating a printing device belonging to at least two language groups and having the highest information processing speed among printing devices belonging to at least two language groups as a managing printing device;

(c) storing device information regarding at least one of the printing devices belonging to a language group processable by the managing printing device; and

(d) transferring print job data, which is received from one of the data processing devices without management by the managing printing device, from a first printing device to a second printing device belonging to the same language group.

31-36. (Canceled)